

faded. But, adds Dr. Toulouse, as soon as Zola ceased to observe consciously, his attention flagged, and at times he did not even recognise acquaintances whom he met in the street. "They think," he said to the doctor, "that when I forget to acknowledge them I am absorbed in deep meditation about my next novel, but as a matter of fact I am not thinking of anything." It was the same with his memory. When he wished to remember any object or scene, the details became printed on his mind as clearly and fully as if they had been photographed. But unless he made a voluntary effort, his memory did not serve him. When he was President de la Société des Gens de Lettres three months elapsed before he could repeat the names of the twenty-four members of the committee. If he had been as deeply interested in those gentlemen as he was in the facts he collected for his books, he would certainly have recalled their names at once.

Some novelists note everything around them, — people, places, and occurrences,— and store them up for subsequent use in one or another book; but that was not Zola's system. If he were writing about peasants, other matters scarcely interested him. You might have told him something curious about soldiers or financiers, he would have given it little heed. He isolated his mind, as it were, concentrated it entirely on the subject he had in

hand, Moreover,
his imagination, was as systematic as his
memory. As
stated in a previous chapter, he first decided
on the gen-
eral ideas he would illustrate; then, by
deduction, he im-
agined the characters likely to illustrate those
ideas. A
thousand concrete facts thereupon arose in
his mind,
grouped themselves in his system, and
imparted life to